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LB 29

open on LB 1029 (sic-LB 29).

SENATOR REDFIELD: Mr. President, members of the body, if you have the bill in front of you, I'd like you to turn to the bottom of page 3 because, in fact, this is a very simple bill and it's only a paragraph long, but we're going to change statute if we approve this bill. It begins with current statute which says; Any employee may choose his or her own representative in any grievance or legal action. That is current law. They have a choice. Now what are we talking about, a legal action? We are talking about, for instance, if an employee is fired and the employee might want to challenge that. Or, in fact, the employer may challenge some action of the employee. What are we talking about with a grievance? We may be talking about here something such as an employee doesn't feel that they've been compensated adequately for overtime, that it was misfigured. Those are the kinds of issues that we right now in statute have given the employee the right to choose their own representative. Now what is happening? What is happening is that rather than going out and hiring their own attorney, most employees where there are union representatives within the employee's system are going to the union and asking for free representation, and the unions feel obligated to provide it. The non...the union employees, of course, are feeling quite unhappy about that because, basically, the nonunion employee is getting free representation that they are paying for. So this is something that causes strife in the workplace. I recognize it as a legitimate problem and LB 29 is an attempt to fix it. What it says on page 4 is, the meat of it starts in line 3: If an employee who is not a member of the labor organization chooses to have legal representation from the labor organization in any grievance or legal action, such employee shall reimburse the labor organization for the actual legal fees and court costs incurred by the labor organization in representing that employee in such grievance or legal action. It's saying if you are going to choose us, you are going to have to pay. The reason I like this bill is because it is about personal choice and personal responsibility for that choice. I think it's a fair bill. I think that it addresses a system that has been unequal and has caused strife in the workplace. If you look at your committee statement, you will see that we had supporters for the bill that